REMARKS

Please reconsider the application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Applicant thanks the Examiner for carefully considering this application. These amendments supercede all previous amendments and the status of the claims used herein is the most current.

I. Disposition of Claims

Claims 1-12 are pending in this application. Claim 13 has been added in this reply; support found in claims 1 and 6. Claims 1, 4, 5, and 8 have been amended in this reply. Claims 7, 10, and 12 have been cancelled by this reply. Claims 1, 4, 5, and 13 are independent. The remaining claims depend, directly or indirectly, from claims 1, 4, and 5. No new matter was added by way of these amendments.

II. Rejection under 35 U.S.C § 112

Claims 7, 10, and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The Examiner asserts that the subject matter of the claims was not described in the specification in such a way to reasonably convey to one skilled in the art that the Applicant had possession of the invention. Claims 7, 10, and 12 have been cancelled by this reply rendering this rejection moot.

Claim 7 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite, because "at upper edge" lacks proper antecedent basis. The Applicant respectfully notes that "at upper edge" is not a limitation of claim 7 but of claim 8. Claim 8 has been amended to recite "at the upper edge." Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

III. Rejection under 35 U.S.C § 103

Claims 1-12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatenable over U.S. Patent No. 5,975,520 ("Shim") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,070,868 ("Nagato") . Claims 1, 4, 5 have been amended in this reply to clarify the claimed invention. Specifically, these claims have been amended in response to the Examiner's comments in the last action to clarify the "frontward" direction. Entry of the amendment is therefore kindly requested. To the extent that this rejection may still apply to the amended claims, the rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Present Invention

In reference to Figures 1 and 5, the present invention relates to a sheet tray body (10), which is able to move from a closed position (as shown in Figure 5) to an open position (as shown in Figure 1) by rotating around a shaft (12). In the closed position the sheet tray body (10) is accommodated within a sheet feeder body (6).

In the open position (or when being used), the sheet tray body (10) is moved such that the sheet tray body is connected to sheet mounting portion (4), as shown in Figure 4. In Figure 4, a stepped portion (10a) is provided in the sheet tray body (10), so that a connection portion, between the sheet tray body (10) and an upper edge (4a) of the sheet

mounting portion (4) are "flush" with respect to one another. In other words, the sheet tray (10) and the sheet mounting portion are in connection in this step-like manner, so that the surface of the sheet mounting portion (4) and the surface of the sheet tray body (10) are level with each other.

Further, there are thrusting members (or ribs(13)) that lock the sheet tray body (10) into position by pushing the sheet tray body "front-forwardly," *i.e.*, toward the sheet mounting surface.

Shim

Shim relates to an expandable tray for supporting sheets that are to be fed into a printer. The expandable tray (100) includes a first tray (10) a second tray (20) and a third tray(30). In particular, Figures 1 and 2 show the expandable tray in closed and open positions, respectively. In the open position, tray (20) is rotated about shaft (12) and guided by slot (21) in the direction A (as shown by Figure 2). Further, tray (30) may be pulled out in the direction B. Figure 3 shows a sectional (or side view) of the trays in the open position. (See col. 3, l. 54-col. 4, l. 12.)

In the side view it is clear that Shim does not show or suggest a stepped portion as recited in independent claims 1, 4, 5, and 13. The independent claims require "a stepped portion provided *in* said sheet tray body in such a fashion as to be placed in a connection portion, in which said sheet tray body and an upper edge part of a sheet mounting portion of said sheet feeder body are connected to each other, when said sheet tray body is used."

The present invention specifically addresses the configuration of Shim as shown in Figure 3. Figure 3 of Shim and Figure 11 (prior art figure) of the instant application show trays having a typical stepped configuration, which causes sheets to be caught in

between the trays. Advantageously, the present invention provides a stepped portion *in* the sheet tray body, thereby creating a connection portion as shown in Figure 4 in which the sheet mounting portion is flush with respect to the sheet tray body. (Compare Figure 4 of the present application with Figure 11 of the present application and Figure 3 of Shim.)

Further, as acknowledged by the Examiner, Shim does not disclose or suggest a thrusting member as required by the claims. Because Shim does not show or suggest a stepped portion or a thrusting member, Shim cannot anticipate or render obvious the claimed invention.

Nagato

Nagato fails to overcome the deficiencies of Shim. Particularly, Nagato teaches the use of an auxiliary tray for printing that folds in and out when moving to open and closed positions. Figure 3 shows the auxiliary sheet tray as taught by Nagato in the open position, and Figure 4 shows the auxiliary sheet tray in the closed position. Figures 6a and 6b show the rib (29) for "locking" the auxiliary tray (25) into the open position. In particular, rib (29) engages with the protrusions (21e) on the edge of the main tray (21). (See col. 4, ll. 48-57.)

Nagato is completely silent as to a stepped portion as required by the claims. Further, Nagato does not show or suggest "a thrusting member for frontwardly pushing said sheet tray body when said sheet tray is used, wherein the thrusting member pushes the sheet tray body towards the sheet mounting surface." The rib as taught by Nagato simply engages with a protrusion on the main tray once the auxiliary tray has been folded out to a particular angle. This is illustrated by the following figure, which is presented

herein for the sole purpose of facilitating the Examiner's understanding of a rib as taught by Nagato.

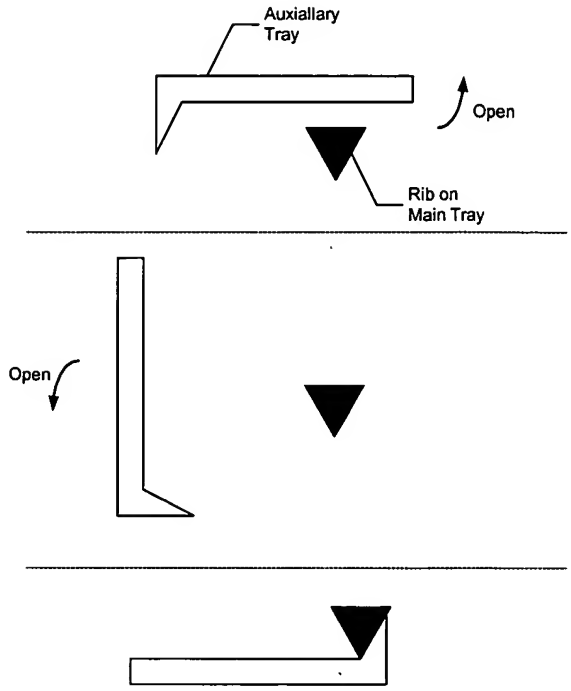

Figure A- A rib as taught by U.S. Patent No. 6,070,868 ("Nagato").

In Nagato, the ribs do not "front forwardly" push the auxiliary tray toward the mounting surface. The rib as taught by Nagato *inhibits* (or prevents) further movement of the auxiliary tray, when unfolding the auxiliary tray to an open position. This can also be seen in Figures 6a and 6b of Nagato.

In contrast, the present invention provides a thrusting member for pushing the sheet body tray forward towards the mounting surface, such that the sheet tray is integral to the mounting surface. This is illustrated by the following figure, which is presented herein for the sole purpose of facilitating the Examiner's understanding of one or more embodiments of a thrusting member (or rib) in the present invention.

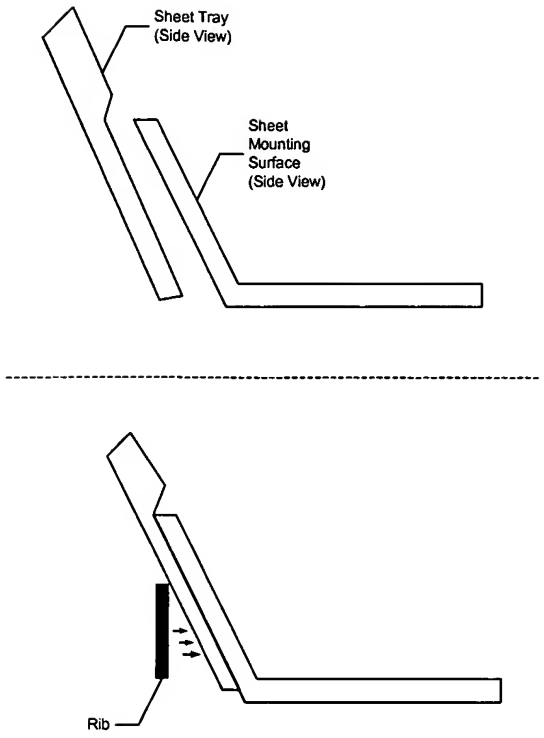

Figure B- An embodiment of a rib in the present invention.

Figure B shows a sheet tray and mounting surface without a rib (top figure) and with a rib (bottom figure). Without a rib, the sheet tray and mounting surface are not in connection. However, the rib, as shown in the bottom figure, effectively pushes the sheet tray towards the sheet mounting surface. For the sake of simplicity, the main body of the printer is not shown, however, one skilled in the art will appreciate that the rib is disposed between the main body of the printer and the sheet tray. Therefore, as a result of this structure, the thrusting force for stabling the sheet tray is applied.

As discussed above, the rib as taught by Nagato prevents movement of the tray, whereas the thrusting member of the present invention front-forwardly stimulates movement of the sheet tray. Therefore, Nagato fails to teach a thrusting member as required by claims 1, 4, 5, and 13.

In view of the above, it is apparent that Shim and Nagato, whether taken singly or in combination, fail to show or suggest the invention as claimed. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

IV. Conclusion

Applicant believes this reply to be fully responsive to all outstanding issues and place this application in condition for allowance. If this belief is incorrect, or other issues arise, do not hesitate to contact the undersigned or his associates at the telephone number listed below. Please apply any charges not covered, or any credits, to Deposit Account 50-0591 (Reference Number 04995.039001).

Respectfully submitted,

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